

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1           1. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2           determining one or more acceptable changes, each acceptable change  
3           corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
4           determining a change in share of the comparison product in a case that the  
5           comparison product is changed according to one or more of the one or more acceptable  
6           changes,  
7           wherein the determination of the change in share of the comparison product is  
8           based at least on the one or more of the one or more acceptable changes and on  
9           preference information associated with a plurality of respondents.
- 1           2. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising determining attribute  
2           levels of each of a plurality of products of interest; and  
3           wherein the step of determining a change in share comprises:  
4           determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, a total utility of each product  
5           of interest and of the comparison product;  
6           determining, for each respondent, a most-preferred product of the products of  
7           interest and of the comparison product based on the total utilities thereof;  
8           determining a share of the comparison product based on a number of respondents  
9           for whom the comparison product is most-preferred;  
10          determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, a total utility of the  
11          comparison product as changed according to the one or more of the one or more  
12          acceptable changes;  
13          determining, for each respondent, a most-preferred product of the products of  
14          interest and of the changed comparison product based on the total utilities thereof; and  
15          determining a share of the changed comparison product based on a number of  
16          respondents for whom the changed comparison product is most-preferred.

- 1           3. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

2 determining a change in share of each of a plurality of products in a case that the  
3 comparison product is changed according to the one or more of the one or more  
4 acceptable changes.

1 4. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one or more of the one or more  
2 acceptable changes comprise a change to a first attribute, and wherein the step of  
3 determining a share comprises:

4 determining a first change in share of the comparison product in a case that the  
5 comparison product is changed only according to the change to the first attribute.

1 5. A method according to Claim 4, wherein the one or more of the one or more  
2 acceptable changes comprise a change to a second attribute, and wherein the step of  
3 determining a share comprises:

4 determining a second change in share of the comparison product in a case that the  
5 comparison product is changed only according to the change to the second attribute.

1 6. A method according to Claim 5, further comprising:  
2 determining a relative importance of the first attribute and a relative importance of  
3 the second attribute based on the first change in share and on the second change in share.

1 7. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one or more of the one or more  
2 acceptable changes comprise a change to an attribute, and wherein the step of  
3 determining the share comprises:

4 determining a first change in share of the comparison product in a case that the  
5 comparison product is changed only according to a first change to the attribute; and  
6 determining a second change in share of the comparison product in a case that the  
7 comparison product is changed only according to a second change to the attribute.

1 8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein the attribute is price, and further  
2 comprising:

3           presenting the first change in share and the second change in share in association  
4           with the first change to the attribute and the second change to the attribute, respectively.

1           9. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2           determining one or more acceptable changes corresponding to one or more  
3           attribute levels of a comparison product; and  
4           determining a share of the comparison product in a case that the comparison  
5           product is changed according to one or more of the one or more acceptable changes,  
6           wherein the determination of the share is based at least on the one or more of the  
7           one or more acceptable changes and on preference information associated with a plurality  
8           of respondents.

1           10. A method according to Claim 9, further comprising determining attribute  
2           levels of each of a plurality of products of interest; and  
3           wherein the step of determining the share comprises:  
4           determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, a total utility of each product  
5           of interest and of the comparison product as changed according to the one or more of the  
6           one or more acceptable changes; and  
7           determining, for each respondent, a most-preferred product of the products of  
8           interest and of the changed comparison product based on the total utilities thereof.

1           11. A method according to Claim 9, further comprising:  
2           determining a share of each of a plurality of products in a case that the  
3           comparison product is changed according to one or more of the one or more acceptable  
4           changes.

1           12. A method according to Claim 9, wherein the one or more of the one or more  
2           acceptable changes comprise a plurality of acceptable changes to an attribute of the  
3           comparison product, and wherein the step of determining a share further comprises:

4 determining, for each of the plurality of acceptable changes to the attribute, a  
5 share of the comparison product in a case that the comparison product is changed  
6 according to an acceptable change.

1 13. A method according to Claim 12, further comprising:  
2 determining, for each of the plurality of acceptable changes to the attribute, a  
3 share of each of a plurality of products in a case that the comparison product is changed  
4 according to an acceptable change.

1 14. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a first determining step of determining one or more acceptable changes, each  
3 acceptable change corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
4 a second determining step of determining, based at least on preference  
5 information associated with a respondent, a change in a utility associated with a change  
6 in an attribute of the comparison product, wherein the change comprises one or more of  
7 the one or more acceptable changes.

1 15. A method according to Claim 14, wherein the second determining step  
2 further comprises:  
3 determining, for each of a plurality of respondents, a corresponding individual  
4 change in an individual normalized utility associated with the change in the attribute of  
5 the comparison product; and  
6 determining the change in the utility associated with the attribute of the  
7 comparison product based on a plurality of the individual changes.

1 16. A method according to Claim 15, further comprising:  
2 determining, for each of a plurality of changes in normalized utility, a percentage  
3 or a number of the plurality of respondents whose corresponding individual change is  
4 similar to a change in normalized utility.

1 17. A method according to Claim 16, further comprising:

2 presenting the indication only if the statistical difference exceeds a predetermined  
3 value.

1 18. A method according to Claim 15, further comprising:  
2 presenting an indication of a statistical difference between each of the individual  
3 changes.

1 19. A method according to Claims 14 or 15, further comprising:  
2 presenting the change in the utility associated with the change in the attribute.

1 20. A method according to Claims 14 or 15, wherein the one or more acceptable  
2 changes comprise a plurality of acceptable changes in the attribute, and wherein the  
3 second determining step comprises:  
4 determining, for each of the plurality of acceptable changes in the attribute, a  
5 change in a normalized utility associated with a change in the attribute; and  
6 presenting the change in the utility of the attribute.

1 21. A method according to Claim 20, further comprising:  
2 presenting, for each of the plurality of acceptable changes in the attribute, a  
3 percentage of respondents for whom an acceptable change reflects an unacceptable  
4 attribute level.

1 22. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a first step of determining one or more acceptable changes, each acceptable  
3 change corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
4 a second step of determining an amount willing to be paid by a respondent for one  
5 or more of the one or more acceptable changes based on preference information  
6 associated with the respondent.

1 23. A method according to Claim 22, wherein the second determining step  
2 further comprises:

3 determining a utility of a price of the comparison product based on the preference  
4 information;

5 determining a utility of one attribute of the comparison product based on the  
6 preference information;

7 determining a utility of the one attribute as changed according to one of the one or  
8 more acceptable changes based on the preference information;

9 determining a utility of a price of the comparison product as changed according to  
10 the one acceptable change based on the preference information;

11 determining a price of the comparison product as changed according to the one  
12 acceptable change based on the determined utility of the price of the comparison product  
13 as changed according to the one or more acceptable changes; and

14 subtracting the price of the comparison product from the price of the comparison  
15 product as changed according to the one acceptable change.

1 24. A method according to Claim 22, wherein the second determining step  
2 comprises:

3 determining an individual amount willing to be paid by each of a plurality of  
4 respondents for the one or more of the one or more acceptable changes based on  
5 preference information associated with the plurality of respondents; and

6 determining the amount willing to be paid based on a plurality of the individual  
7 amounts willing to be paid.

1 25. A method according to 24, further comprising:

2 presenting an indication of a statistical difference between each of the individual  
3 amounts willing to be paid.

1 26. A method according to Claim 25, further comprising:

2 presenting the indication only if the statistical difference exceeds a predetermined  
3 value.

1 27. A method according to Claims 22 or 24, further comprising:

2 presenting the amount willing to be paid for the one or more of the one or more  
3 acceptable changes.

1 28. A method according to Claims 22 or 24, wherein the one or more acceptable  
2 changes comprise a plurality of acceptable changes in an attribute, and further  
3 comprising:

4 determining the change in the amount willing to be paid for each of the plurality  
5 of acceptable changes as compared to the amount willing to be paid for the comparison  
6 product without each of the plurality of acceptable changes.

1 29. A method according to Claim 28, further comprising:  
2 presenting, for each of the plurality of acceptable changes in the attribute, a  
3 percentage of respondents for whom an acceptable change reflects an unacceptable  
4 attribute level.

1 30. A method according to Claims 22 or 24, further comprising:  
2 presenting the amount willing to be paid and a cost of the one or more of the one  
3 or more acceptable changes.

1 31. A method according to Claim 30, further comprising:  
2 presenting a market price of the one or more of the one or more acceptable  
3 changes.

1 32. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a first step of determining one or more acceptable changes, each acceptable  
3 change corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
4 a second step of determining, for each of a plurality of changes in price, a change  
5 in share in a case that the comparison product is changed according to one or more of the  
6 one or more acceptable changes, based on preference information associated with a  
7 respondent.

1           33. A method according to Claim 32, wherein the second determining step  
2 comprises:  
3           determining, for each of the plurality of changes in price, an individual change in  
4 a most-preferred product in a case that the comparison product is changed according to  
5 the one or more of the one or more acceptable changes, based on preference information  
6 associated with each of a plurality of respondents; and  
7           determining the change in share for each of the plurality of changes in price based  
8 on a plurality of the individual changes in the most-preferred product.

1           34. A method according to Claims 32 or 33, further comprising:  
2 presenting the change in share for each of the plurality of changes in price.

1           35. A method according to Claim 32, determining attribute levels of each of a  
2 plurality of products of interest; and  
3           wherein the second determining step comprises:  
4           determining, for each of a plurality of respondents, a total utility of each product  
5 of interest and of the comparison product;  
6           determining, for each respondent, a most-preferred product of the products of  
7 interest and of the comparison product based on the total utilities thereof;  
8           determining a share of the comparison product based on a number of respondents  
9 for whom the comparison product is most-preferred;  
10          determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, a total utility of the  
11 comparison product as changed according to the one or more of the one or more  
12 acceptable changes;  
13          determining, for each respondent, a most-preferred product of the products of  
14 interest and of the changed comparison product based on the total utilities thereof; and  
15          determining a share of the changed comparison product based on a number of  
16 respondents for whom the changed comparison product is most-preferred.

1           36. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a step of determining preference information associated with a respondent;



3 a step of determining attribute levels for one or more comparison products; and  
4 a third step of determining a value relating a theoretical optimal product  
5 associated with the respondent and one of the one or more comparison products that is  
6 most preferred by the respondent based on the preference information and on the attribute  
7 levels.

1 37. A method according to Claim 36, wherein the attribute levels correspond to a  
2 plurality of attributes, and wherein the third step comprises:  
3 determining, for each of the plurality of attributes, an attribute-specific value  
4 relating an attribute of the most-preferred product and a respective attribute of the  
5 theoretical optimal product.

1 38. A method according to Claim 37, further comprising:  
2 presenting the determined value and the determined attribute-specific values, the  
3 determined value being based on a sum of the attribute-specific values.

1 39. A method according to Claim 37, further comprising:  
2 presenting an indication of a percentage and/or an indication of a number of  
3 respondents for whom each of the one or more comparison products is associated with an  
4 unacceptable attribute level.

1 40. A method according to Claim 36, wherein the step of determining preference  
2 information comprises determining preference information associated with a plurality of  
3 respondents, and wherein the third step comprises:  
4 determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, an individual value relating  
5 a theoretical optimal product and a most-preferred one of the one or more comparison  
6 products based on the preference information and on the attribute levels.

1 41. A method according to Claim 40, further comprising:  
2 presenting, for a plurality of the individual values, an indication of a number or a  
3 percentage of respondents associated with an individual value.

1 42. A method according to Claims 36 or 40, wherein the one or more comparison  
2 products comprise a client entity's product line.

1 43. A method according to Claims 36 or 40, wherein the one or more comparison  
2 products comprise a client entity's proposed product line.

1 44. A method according to Claims 36 or 40, wherein the one or more comparison  
2 products comprise a client entity's competitor's proposed product line.

1 45. A method according to Claims 36 or 40, wherein the one or more comparison  
2 products comprise a client entity's competitor's proposed product line.

1 46. A method according to Claim 36, wherein the third determining step  
2 comprises:  
3 determining a total utility of each of the one or more comparison products;  
4 determining the most preferred one of the comparison products based on the total  
5 utilities;  
6 determining a total utility of the theoretical optimal product; and  
7 subtracting the total utility of the most-preferred product from the utility of the  
8 theoretical optimal product to produce a difference and dividing the difference by the  
9 utility of the theoretical optimal product.

1 47. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 determining preference information associated with a respondent;  
3 determining attribute levels of each of one or more client's products and of each  
4 of one or more competitor's products; and  
5 determining, based on the preference information and on the attribute levels, a  
6 value relating the respondent's preference for the attribute levels of a most-preferred one  
7 of the one or more client's products and the respondent's preference for the attribute  
8 levels of a most-preferred one of the one or more competitor's products.

1           48. A method according to Claim 47, wherein the step of determining preference  
2 information comprises determining preference information associated with a plurality of  
3 respondents, and further comprising:

4           presenting an indication of a percentage and/or an indication of a number of  
5 respondents for which each product of the one or more client's products is associated  
6 with an unacceptable attribute level.

1           49. A method according to Claim 48, further comprising:  
2           presenting an indication of a percentage and/or an indication of a number of  
3 respondents for which each product of the one or more competitor's products is  
4 associated with an unacceptable attribute level.

1           50. A method according to Claim 47, wherein the step of determining preference  
2 information comprises determining preference information associated with a plurality of  
3 respondents, and wherein the step of determining the value further comprises:

4           determining a value relating preferences for the attribute levels of a most-  
5 preferred one of the one or more client's products and preferences for the attribute levels  
6 of a most-preferred one of the one or more competitor's products for each of the plurality  
7 of respondents.

1           51. A method according to Claim 47, wherein the value reflects a difference  
2 between a utility of the attribute levels of a most-preferred one of the one or more client's  
3 products and a utility of corresponding attribute levels of a most-preferred one of the one  
4 or more competitor's products.

1           52. A method according to Claims 47, 50 or 51, wherein the relationship is  
2 expressed as an index.

1           53. A method according to Claim 47, wherein the step of determining a value  
2 comprises:

3 determining a total utility of each of the one or more client's products and of each  
4 of the one or more competitor's products;  
5 determining the most preferred one of the client's products and of the  
6 competitor's products based on the total utilities; and  
7 subtracting the total utility of the most-preferred one of the competitor's products  
8 from the total utility of the most-preferred one of the client's products and dividing the  
9 difference by the total utility of the most-preferred one of the client's products.

1 54. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 determining preference information associated with a plurality of respondents;  
3 determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, which of the attribute levels  
4 are unacceptable based on the preference information; and  
5 presenting, for one or more attribute levels, a percentage and/or an indication of a  
6 number of respondents for whom the attribute level is unacceptable.

1 55. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 determining attribute levels of each of one or more client's products and of each  
3 of one or more competitor's products;  
4 determining preference information associated with a respondent for whom at  
5 least one of the client's products is preferred over each of the one or more competitor's  
6 products; and  
7 determining a value relating the respondent's preference for a most-preferred one  
8 of the client's products and the respondent's preference for a most-preferred one of the  
9 one or more competitor's products.

1 56. A method according to Claim 55, wherein at least one of the one or more  
2 client's products is a proposed product.

1 57. A method according to Claim 55, wherein at least one of the competitor's  
2 products is a proposed product.

1 58. A method according to Claim 55, wherein the step of determining preference  
2 information comprises:

3 determining preference information associated with a plurality of respondents for  
4 whom at least one of the client's products is preferred over each of the one or more  
5 competitor's products;

6 wherein the step of determining a value comprises:

7 determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, an individual value relating  
8 an individual respondent's preference for an individually most-preferred one of the  
9 client's products and the individual respondent's preference for an individually most-  
10 preferred one of the competitor's products; and further comprising:

11 determining an aggregate value representing an aggregate relationship based on  
12 the individual values.

1 59. A method according to Claim 58, further comprising:

2 presenting a number or percentage of respondents associated with each of a  
3 plurality of ranges of individual values.

1 60. A method according to Claim 58, further comprising:

2 determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, a second individual value  
3 relating an individual respondent's preference for a product having at least one attribute  
4 level different from the attribute levels of the individually most-preferred one of the  
5 client's products and the individual respondent's preference for an individually most-  
6 preferred one of the competitor's products; and further comprising:

7 determining a second aggregate value representing a second aggregate  
8 relationship based on the second individual values; and  
9 presenting the determined second aggregate values.

1 61. A method according to Claim 60, wherein the product has only one attribute

2 level different from the attribute levels of the individually most-preferred one of the  
3 client's products.

1           62. A method according to Claim 58, further comprising:  
2           determining a change in the aggregate value due to a change in a first attribute  
3           level of the individually most-preferred one of the client's products; and  
4           presenting the change in the aggregate value with respect to the change in the first  
5           attribute level.

1           63. A method according to Claim 55, further comprising:  
2           determining a second value relating the respondent's preference for a product  
3           having at least one attribute level different from the attribute levels of the most-preferred  
4           one of the client's products and the respondent's preference for the most-preferred one of  
5           the competitor's products; and  
6           presenting the determined second value.

1           64. A method according to Claim 63, wherein the product has only one attribute  
2           level different from the attribute levels of the one of the client's products.

1           65. A method according to Claim 55, further comprising:  
2           determining a change in the value due to a change in a first attribute level of the  
3           most-preferred one of the client's products; and  
4           presenting the change in the value with respect to the change in the first attribute  
5           level.

1           66. A method according to Claim 55, wherein the step of determining the value  
2           comprises:  
3           determining a total utility of each of the one or more client's products and the one  
4           or more competitor's products;  
5           determining the most-preferred one of the client's products and the most-preferred  
6           one of the competitor's products based on the total utilities; and  
7           dividing a total utility of the most-preferred one of the client's products by a total  
8           utility of the most-preferred one of the competitor's products.

1           67. A method for processing preference information, comprising:  
2           determining attribute levels of each of one or more client's products and of each  
3 of one or more competitor's products;  
4           determining preference information associated with a respondent for whom at  
5 least one of the competitor's products is preferred over each of the one or more client's  
6 products; and  
7           determining a value relating the respondent's preference for a most-preferred one  
8 of the competitor's products and the respondent's preference for a most-preferred one of  
9 the one or more client's products.

1           68. A method according to Claim 67, wherein at least one of the competitor's  
2 products is a proposed product.

1           69. A method according to Claim 67, wherein at least one of the client's products  
2 is a proposed product.

1           70. A method according to Claim 67, wherein the step of determining preference  
2 information comprises:

3           determining preference information associated with a plurality of respondents for  
4 whom at least one of the competitor's products is preferred over each of the one or more  
5 client's products;

6           wherein the step of determining a relationship comprises:

7           determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, an individual value relating  
8 an individual respondent's preference for the an individually most-preferred one of the  
9 competitor's products and the individual respondent's preference for an individually  
10 most-preferred one of the client's products; and further comprising:

11           determining an aggregate value representing an aggregate relationship based on  
12 the individual values.

1           71. A method according to Claim 70, further comprising:

2 presenting a number or percentage of respondents associated with each of a  
3 plurality of individual values.

1 72. A method according to Claim 70, further comprising:  
2 determining, for each of the plurality of respondents, a second individual value  
3 relating an individual respondent's preference for a product having all but one attribute  
4 level different from the attribute levels of the individually most-preferred one of the  
5 competitor's products and the individual respondent's preference for an individually  
6 most-preferred one of the client's products; and further comprising:  
7 determining a second aggregate value representing a second aggregate  
8 relationship based on the second individual values; and  
9 presenting the determined second aggregate values.

1 73. A method according to Claim 70, further comprising:  
2 determining a change in the aggregate value due to a change in a first attribute  
3 level of the individually most-preferred one of the competitor's products; and  
4 presenting the change in the aggregate value with respect to the change in the first  
5 attribute level.

1 74. A method according to 67, further comprising:  
2 determining a second value relating the respondent's preference for a product  
3 having all but one attribute level different from the attribute levels of the most-preferred  
4 one of the competitor's products and the respondent's preference for the most-preferred  
5 one of the client's products; and  
6 presenting the determined second value.

1 75. A method according to Claim 67, further comprising:  
2 determining a change in the value due to a change in a first attribute level of the  
3 most-preferred one of the competitor's products; and  
4 presenting the change in the value with respect to the change in the first attribute  
5 level.





determining, based on the preference information, one or more of the one or more respondents for whom a first brand is a most-preferred brand;

determining a value relating preferences of the one or more of the one or more respondents for a second brand of the plurality of brands and preferences of the one or more of the one or more respondents for the plurality of brands; and

repeating the step of determining the value such that the value is determined for each of the plurality of brands as the second brand.

81. A method according to Claim 80, further comprising:  
presenting one or more of the determined values.

82. A method according to Claim 80, wherein the step of determining the value comprises:

adding the preferences of one respondent for the plurality of brands to produce a sum; and

dividing, for each of the plurality of brands, the preferences of the one respondent for a brand by the sum.

83. A method for processing preference information, comprising:

determining one or more attribute levels of a comparison product;

determining one or more acceptable changes, each of the acceptable changes corresponding to one of the determined one or more attribute levels;

determining a cost of the one or more acceptable changes;

determining a willingness to pay for the one or more acceptable changes based on preference information associated with a respondent; and

determining a value representing a change in margin in a case that the comparison product is changed according to the one or more acceptable changes, based at least in part on the cost and the willingness to pay.

1           84. A method according to Claim 83, wherein the willingness to pay is an  
2 aggregate willingness to pay determined based on preference information associated with  
3 a plurality of respondents.

1           85. A method according to Claim 83, wherein the step of determining the value  
2 comprises:

3           determining a first value in a case that the comparison product is changed  
4 according to only one change to an attribute, based on a cost of the one change and on a  
5 willingness to pay for the one change;

6           determining a second value in a case that the comparison product is changed  
7 according to only a second change to the attribute, based on a cost of the second change  
8 and on a willingness to pay for the second change; and

9           presenting the first value and the second value.

1           86. A method according to Claim 83, further comprising:

2           determining a willingness to pay for the one or more acceptable changes for each  
3 of a plurality of respondents based on preference information associated with each of the  
4 plurality of respondents; and

5           determining a value, for each of the plurality of respondents, representing a  
6 change in margin in a case that the comparison product is changed according to the one  
7 or more acceptable changes, based at least in part on the cost and the willingness to pay  
8 determined for each respondent.

1           87. A method according to Claim 86, further comprising:

2           determining a percentage or a number of the plurality of respondents that are  
3 associated with values within each of a plurality of ranges of values.

1           88. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:

2           a processor; and

3           a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by the processor to:

5           determine one or more acceptable changes, each acceptable change  
6           corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
7           determine a change in share of the comparison product in a case that the  
8           comparison product is changed according to one or more of the one or more  
9           acceptable changes,  
10          wherein the determination of the change in share of the comparison  
11          product is based at least on the one or more of the one or more acceptable changes  
12          and on preference information associated with a plurality of respondents.

1           89. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2           a processor; and  
3           a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4           adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5           determine one or more acceptable changes corresponding to one or more  
6           attribute levels of a comparison product; and  
7           determine a share of the comparison product in a case that the comparison  
8           product is changed according to one or more of the one or more acceptable  
9           changes,  
10          wherein the determination of the share is based at least on the one or more  
11          of the one or more acceptable changes and on preference information associated  
12          with a plurality of respondents.

1           90. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2           a processor; and  
3           a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4           adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5           determine one or more acceptable changes, each acceptable change  
6           corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
7           determine, based at least on preference information associated with a  
8           respondent, a change in a utility associated with a change in an attribute of the

9 comparison product, wherein the change comprises one or more of the one or  
10 more acceptable changes.

1 91. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a processor; and  
3 a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5 determine one or more acceptable changes, each acceptable change  
6 corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
7 determine an amount willing to be paid by a respondent for one or more of  
8 the one or more acceptable changes based on preference information associated  
9 with the respondent.

1 92. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a processor; and  
3 a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5 determine one or more acceptable changes, each acceptable change  
6 corresponding to an attribute of a comparison product; and  
7 determine, for each of a plurality of changes in price, a change in share in  
8 a case that the comparison product is changed according to one or more of the one  
9 or more acceptable changes, based on preference information associated with a  
10 respondent.

1 93. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a processor; and  
3 a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5 determine preference information associated with a respondent;  
6 determine attribute levels for one or more comparison products; and

7                   determine a value relating a theoretical optimal product associated with  
8                   the respondent and one of the one or more comparison products that is most  
9                   preferred by the respondent based on the preference information and on the  
10                  attribute levels.

1                  94. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2                  a processor; and  
3                  a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4                  adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5                      determine preference information associated with a respondent;  
6                      determine attribute levels of each of one or more client's products and of  
7                      each of one or more competitor's products; and  
8                      determine, based on the preference information and on the attribute levels,  
9                      a value relating the respondent's preference for the attribute levels of a most-  
10                     preferred one of the one or more client's products and the respondent's preference  
11                     for the attribute levels of a most-preferred one of the one or more competitor's  
12                     products.

1                  95. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2                  a processor; and  
3                  a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4                  adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5                      determine preference information associated with a plurality of  
6                      respondents;  
7                      determine, for each of the plurality of respondents, which of the attribute  
8                      levels are unacceptable based on the preference information; and  
9                      present, for one or more attribute levels, a percentage and/or an indication  
10                     of a number of respondents for whom the attribute level is unacceptable.

1                  96. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2                  a processor; and

3 a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5 determine attribute levels of each of one or more client's products and of  
6 each of one or more competitor's products;  
7 determine preference information associated with a respondent for whom  
8 at least one of the client's products is preferred over each of the one or more  
9 competitor's products; and  
10 determine a value relating the respondent's preference for a most-  
11 preferred one of the client's products and the respondent's preference for a most-  
12 preferred one of the one or more competitor's products.

1 97. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a processor; and  
3 a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5 determine attribute levels of each of one or more client's products and of  
6 each of one or more competitor's products;  
7 determine preference information associated with a respondent for whom  
8 at least one of the competitor's products is preferred over each of the one or more  
9 client's products; and  
10 determine a value relating the respondent's preference for a most-  
11 preferred one of the competitor's products and the respondent's preference for a  
12 most-preferred one of the one or more client's products.

1 98. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2 a processor; and  
3 a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5 determine preference information associated with one or more  
6 respondents, the preference information including preference information for a  
7 plurality of brands;

8                   determine, based on the preference information, one or more of the one or  
9                   more respondents for whom a first brand is a most-preferred brand; and

10                  determine a value relating preferences of the one or more of the one or  
11                  more respondents for a second brand of the plurality of brands and preferences of  
12                  the one or more of the one or more respondents for the plurality of brands.

1                  99. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2                  a processor; and  
3                  a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4                  adapted to be executed by the processor to:

5                    determine preference information associated with one or more  
6                    respondents, the preference information including preference information for a  
7                    plurality of brands;

8                    determine, based on the preference information, one or more of the one or  
9                    more respondents for whom a first brand is a most-preferred brand;

10                  determine a value relating preferences of the one or more of the one or  
11                  more respondents for a second brand of the plurality of brands and preferences of  
12                  the one or more of the one or more respondents for the plurality of brands; and

13                  repeat the step of determining the value such that the value is determined  
14                  for each of the plurality of brands as the second brand.

1                  100. An apparatus for processing preference information, comprising:  
2                  a processor; and  
3                  a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions  
4                  adapted to be executed by the processor to:  
5                    determine one or more attribute levels of a comparison product;  
6                    determine one or more acceptable changes, each of the acceptable changes  
7                    corresponding to one of the determined one or more attribute levels;  
8                    determine a cost of the one or more acceptable changes;  
9                    determine a willingness to pay for the one or more acceptable changes  
10                  based on preference information associated with a respondent; and



- 11                   determine a value representing a change in margin in a case that the  
12 comparison product is changed according to the one or more acceptable changes,  
13 based at least in part on the cost and the willingness to pay.

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